

orange-yellow; tail blackish brown, margined exteriorly with yellow.

Length 4 inches; bill from gape 5 lines; wings 2 inches; tarsi 9 lines.

XLVII.—*Notice of some Rarities found on the West Coast of Scotland.* By the REV. DAVID LANDSBOROUGH.

IN this lazy world a person is often much indebted to the eyes and hands of others in helping him to observe and collect. How helpful might colliers and fishermen be, the former being so often in the bowels of the earth, and the latter by their lines and nets coming so often in contact with the depths of the sea! But they *canna' be fashed*. From one obliging fisherman in Milport, island of Cumbrae, who has not learned to say "I canna be fashed," I have got many curiosities. He has sent me at least half a dozen examples of *Halichondria infundibuliformis*, the funnel-sponge. One of them is figured in Dr. Johnston's interesting 'History of British Sponges.' The last, got a few months ago, is the variety which ranked for a time as a distinct species under the name of *H. ventilabra*, and is now in the well-stored and liberally-yielding cabinet of Mr. Bean of Scarborough.

From the same quarter I got this last summer a piece of ironstone, which brought up with it some curiosities from the deep sea. It was studded with *Crania personata*, so firmly cemented to the stone that only the upper valve could be detached. There was on the same stone a specimen of *Serpula vitrea* of rather rare occurrence. And winding over the surface of the stone, there was something like a flat sea-worm of a flesh-red colour, having at intervals the appearance of round puckered mouths. I thought I had seen its like before, but as I had mislaid the specimen with which I wished to compare it, I sent it to Mr. W. Thompson, Belfast, a kind resolver of doubts, who informed me that it was, as I had suspected, *Zoanthus Couchii*.

From the same obliging fisherman I got, this summer, *Psolus phantapus*, which was new to me; but respecting which I could have no doubt, from its corresponding so well with the figure and description given by Professor Forbes in his 'History of British Starfishes,' &c.

On the shore at Ardrossan I found this summer, among some sea-weeds, what was new to me, and I believe is rare, *Aplysia punctata*. Even *Aplysia depilans* is rare here.

Acteon viridis, Mont. (sp.).

In a little rocky pool of sea-water, about halfway betwixt Brodick and Corrie, on the Arran shore, I discovered in July 1844

an Alga which seemed new to me. I greedily laid hold of it, and found it no easy matter to detach it from the rock to which it firmly adhered. It turned out to be *Codium tomentosum*—not rare I believe either in England or Ireland, but so rare with us, that the only Scottish specimen I had ever seen, was one given me by my intelligent friend Dr. Curdie (now in the wilds of Australia), which he had got in the island of Gigha, off Cantyre*. On taking it out of the water I observed a greenish gelatinous animal on it; but being taken up with my rare plant, I cast the animal into the pool again. I afterwards saw on the *Codium* two more of the same species, but considerably smaller; and observing that they were beautifully mottled with azure spots, I deposited them in my vasculum among the branches of *Codium*. When, on reaching home, I put them into a tumbler of sea-water, I soon saw that I had got a rare and beautiful mollusk, *Aplysia*, now *Acteon viridis*, discovered by Col. Montagu on the Devonshire coast, and described by him in the 'Transactions' of the Linnæan Society. Allow me to refer to his description as quoted by my excellent friend Professor Fleming of Aberdeen in his 'British Animals,' a book which ought to be in the hands of every British naturalist.

As I kept it for nearly a week in the tumbler, where it seemed to browse with great satisfaction on the delicate woolly beard of the *Codium*, I had every opportunity of observing it, and I found that it was even more beautiful than from Montagu's excellent description I could have supposed. Its general colour is green, betwixt grass-green and bottle-green; but in certain lights it has a considerable shade of rich puce colour of the finest velvet. It is beautifully dotted with azure and with gold. The azure spots are small and numerous on all parts of the body and of the fins, and are precisely of the same brilliant azure as the lines on *Patella pellucida*. The golden spots were confined to the upper parts of the body; they were few in number, but considerably larger and less regular in form than the azure dots. Two of them for instance were oblong, and extended from the ear-like *tentacula* down to the eyes, which were placed on what we would call the *cuff* of the neck, as if to keep watch against the enemies from behind, while it was busy feeding on the rich pasture afforded by the *Codium*.

The membrane which acts as fins is of the same colour and substance as the body. When the fins are raised and meet above, they give it the appearance of being gibbous on the back. More generally however they are a little apart from each other, and in

* I have since learned from Mr. Thompson of Belfast, that he found several plants of it growing in the greatest perfection in a small rock-pool near Ballantrae (Ayrshire) in the month of August 1839.

swimming they extend horizontally from the body, and show, at the base of the neck, betwixt the upper part of the fins, a whitish protuberance bearing some resemblance to the shield on the back of *Aplysia depilans*.

At the base of each fin, and pretty close to the back, there could be seen, when the light was favourable, all along the inside, a line like the midrib of a leaf; and from this double midrib there proceeded at intervals, veins in a slanting direction to the upper margin of each fin; so that when the two fins were expanded, it was like a green-veined leaf. To this appearance it may at times owe its safety by deceiving the eye of prowlers.

The description of the mouths given by Montagu suited my specimens, except that in them the margin only of the *upper* lip was black. The lower lip and part of the throat were quite white, and were the only parts that had none of the azure or golden dots. I may mention in conclusion, that when the animal was held betwixt the eye and the light, the body and the fins seemed full of darkish granules.

On mentioning to Mrs. Griffiths (a name dear to naturalists) that I had fallen in with this green beauty, she informed me that it was frequently found in Devonshire on the *Codium tomentosum*, which seems to be its favourite pasture-ground; and on which, from similarity of colour, it may often escape detection.

Syrinx papillosus, Thomp.

In the month of March last, when my daughter Margaret was picking up some Algæ on the strand near to Stevenston Burn-foot, she observed on the shore a number of gelatinous creatures, blown up like little bags. Fortunately she brought one of them home with her; and unfortunately she brought but one; for it turned out to be the rare *Syrinx papillosus*. I kept it alive for some time and made some observations on it, which I sent, along with its poor remains, to Mr. Thompson. He is a person whom it is a pleasure and a privilege to consult in doubts and difficulties.

I shall add the substance of what I wrote to Mr. Thompson respecting *Syrinx papillosus*.

When found it was in the form of a soda-water bottle, about an inch and a half in length, and about $\frac{7}{8}$ ths of an inch in diameter. On being put into sea-water, it assumed very much the appearance of the figure given by Forbes, being nearly 3 inches in length. The concentric striæ were rather faint; but the longitudinal ones looked like ribs, about fifteen in number, and were fully twice as distant from each other as the concentric ones which they crossed. It soon became flaccid, and contracted to less than half an inch in diameter; but it firmly adhered to the

glass by the short papillæ with which its body was covered. Its colour was dirty white clouded with reddish brown. Next day it was blown up again, had become more lively, and twisted itself into various forms. It gave us no reason to think that it had a proboscis. It only once displayed its tentacula, about twelve in number, which were spread back and lay quite flat around the mouth in the form of a little star. While we waited for a more complete manifestation, it died in our hands, so that the figure was taken by my daughter Margaret in very unfavourable circumstances*. The tentacula were broader at the base than they are represented in the figure. When it put out only the tips of them, they appeared round, obtuse, and marked with reddish brown bands, somewhat like the single magnified tentaculum in the figure. When it died it shrunk into very small dimensions. The concentric corrugations, though still fainter than the ribs, were more evident than when it was alive. The reticulations assumed a beaded aspect, so as to give the body of the creature, in certain lights, a considerable resemblance to a small head of Indian corn.

But let me not forget to mention among the *memorabilia*, a Champagne bottle fished up last summer from the deep sea betwixt Bute and Cumbræ! A bottle of Highland whisky could not have been more prized by my friend James McFee the fisherman, nor a bottle of old Falernian more valued by myself. It seemed quite a knowing, far-travelled, aristocratic bottle. Instead of a cork, it

“Had fix’d a scallop on its *mou*th before.”

Its sides were incrustated with *Serpula triquetra*, and its deep concavity below was inwrought with *Serpula tubularia*. But what did it contain? Ay, there’s the rub. It would take a wise man to answer that question. I never attempted it. It was full, however, of some white, soft, dense substance. Having by dint of assiduity extracted a little of it, I sent it by post to Dr. Stenhouse, a first-rate chemist in Glasgow, begging him to let me know what treasure of the deep this marine vial contained. Having done it all the honours of his laboratory, and having *secundum artem* analysed the precious contents, he returned for answer that “it was fat of some kind—probably tallow”!!!

“Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.”

Asterina gibbosa.

In August 1844 I had the pleasure of finding *Asterina gibbosa*, or the gibbous starlet, in pools of sea-water on the rocky shore of Arran, near to Lamlash. It has been found in several

* In consequence of this, the drawing has not been engraved.

places in England ; and Mr. Thompson, Belfast, has found it all around the coast of Ireland ; but the only habitat in Scotland mentioned by Prof. Edward Forbes is the gneiss shore of Ross-shire.

I may mention, that about five years ago, I found near the same locality at Clackland Point, a little starfish which was quite new to me, and for which afterwards I repeatedly looked in vain. I found two of them alive, adhering to *Halidrys siliquosa*, but they were lost by being deposited in a vasculum which had been so injured that it could not be kept closely shut. This *starlet* was not more than $\frac{5}{8}$ ths of an inch in length, and little more than $\frac{3}{8}$ ths in breadth ; and as it had only four rays, and as the angles were not produced, it had quite the appearance of a miniature oblong shield. It was ash-coloured above. It is possible that it might be an abnormal variety of *Asterina gibbosa*, but this must remain *in dubia* till it is found by some person with a securer vasculum.

XLVIII.—Notes on the Synonymy of the Genus Apion, with Descriptions of Six new Species, &c. By JOHN WALTON, Esq., F.L.S.

[Continued from vol. xiii. p. 457.]

37. *Apion striatum*, Marsh., Kirb., Steph. Manual.
 — *Pisi*, Germ., Steph.
 — *atratum*, Germ., Steph., Schönh.

THIS species may be distinguished from the following by having the head *rugose-punctate* between the eyes, and the vertex with a *smooth shining transverse band* adjoining the thorax ; this is a constant character : the thorax has a distinct *dorsal channel*. The majority have the elytra *obcuneiform* and very convex ; these may be regarded as of the normal form ; but many individuals have a tendency to become much shorter, and these varieties have the elytra *globose-ovate* and *subglobose* ; others are narrowed posteriorly and less convex, having the forms *oblong-ovate* and *oblong-oval* ; hence the difficulty of identifying species from descriptions. Kirby and Stephens describe this species with the elytra *globose* ; Germar and Schönherr as *obcuneiform* : when the extreme forms are contrasted by placing them in juxtaposition, it is difficult to believe that they belong to the same species ; yet in a long series they are closely linked together by a regular transition from one form to another, and by the natural character of the sculpture. Small specimens are sometimes found less than half the magnitude of others, with intermediate sizes. The characters which commonly distinguish the sexes are not very obvious in this and